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General

Vietnam is located in Southeastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and South China Sea, between China and Cambodia.

The climate is tropical in the S. There are monsoons in the N with the hot rainy season lasting from the middle of May to the middle of September. The warm dry season is from the middle of October to the middle of March.

The terrain is low with a flat delta in the S and N. The central highland is reported hilly with mountains in the far N and NW.

Buoyage System

Various systems of buoyage appear to be in force within Vietnamese waters, but because of the limited information received within recent years, changes may have taken place which require caution in the use of charts and publications.

The term starboard hand refers to that side which would be on the right when going with the flood current or entering a harbor, river, or estuary from seaward. The term port hand

refers to that side which would be on the left under the same circumstances.

Currency

The unit of currency is the 1 new dong, consisting of 100 xu.

Government

Vietnam is a Communist State governed by a National Assembly and a highly centralized executive branch.

The President is elected by the National Assembly, and the Great Council consists of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and other Council Ministers.

The capital is Hanoi.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

January 1, New Year's Day; Lunar New Year (3 days in January or February); April 6, Paques Day; May 1, May Day; May 19, Buddha's Birthday; September 2, Independence Day; and December 25, Christmas Day.

Industries

The main industries are based on food processing, textiles, machine building, mining, cement, chemical fertilizer, glass tires, and oil.

Languages

The official language of Vietnam is Vietnamese. Various dialects may be encountered in the N part of the country.

French, English, Chinese, and Khmer are also spoken by a considerable portion of the populace.

Mined Areas

The areas below have been declared dangerous due to mines laid during hostilities in Vietnamese waters.

Mui Ke Ga

The area bound by the parallels of 10°30'N and 10°40'N, between the meridians of 107°58'E and 108°05'E, is safe for surface navigation only. Anchoring, dredging, cable laying, trawling and submarine bottoming should be avoided.

Dao Phu Qui

The area bound by the parallels of 10°23'N and 10°29'N, between the meridians of 108°55'E and 109°00'E, is dangerous due to mines. The waters in and around the entrances to the following ports are reported to be mined:

1. Hai Phong (20°51'N., 106°37'E.).
2. Hon Gai (20°56'N., 107°03'E.).
3. Cam Pha (21°02'N., 107°20'E.).
4. Thanh Hoa (19°48'N., 105°46'E.).
5. Vinh (18°40'N., 105°40'E.).
6. Quang Khe (17°41'N., 106°27'E.).
7. Dong Hoi (17°28'N., 106°35'E.).

Approaches and entrances of additional ports in the S part of Vietnam may also be mined and caution is advised.

Mui Ba Kiem

The area bound by the parallels of 10°10'N and 10°20'N, between the meridians of 107°45'E and 107°55'E, is safe for surface navigation only.

Anchoring, dredging, cable laying, trawling and submarine bottoming should be avoided.

Cu Lao Xanh

The area bound by the parallels of 13°34'N and 13°39'N, between the meridians of 109°16.4'E and 109°21.4'E, is dangerous due to mines.

Air Banjusin

The river is dangerous between the parallels of 2°20'00"S, and 2°23'30"S. A channel 1 mile wide has been swept between these parallels along the fairway of the river.

The W limits pass through 2°20'00"S, 104°49'09"E, and 2°23'30"S, 104°45'00"E.

A channel about 100m wide has been swept with its centerline joining the following positions:

- a. 494m, 270° from 2°23'30"S, 104°45'00"E.
- b. 668m, 360° from 2°20'00"S, 104°49'09"E.
- c. 5 miles from 2°23'30"S, 104°45'00"E.

The upper reaches of Air Banjusin and Air Lalang, which enters Air Banjusin N of Tanjung Serah, are clear for all types of surface vessels.

Air Musi

Although Air Musi has not been swept, it has been navigated so frequently that danger from mines for all vessels may be considered to be negligible.

The following directions should, however, be followed:

1. When making the entrance, vessels should keep to the range lines, taking care not to be W of the inner range N of 2°17'12"S.
2. Vessels should keep to the E side of the river between latitudes 2°34'00"S and 2°35'13"S. Vessels should also be advised to keep to the E side of the river abreast Kampung Upang.

Pilotage

Pilotage is compulsory. In general, all foreign vessels without special clearance must proceed to Hai Phong to board a pilot for any of the deep-water ports in the N part of Vietnam.

Vessels proceeding to S ports should contact the authorities in Thang Pho Ho Chi Minh (Saigon) before proceeding within 20 miles of the coast.

Regulations

Special regulations exist for the approach and entry of foreign vessels into Vietnamese waters.

In general, only those vessels with specific and prearranged permission should attempt to approach the coast and then only when in contact with the authorities.

The following Vietnamese ports are open for foreign trade:

1. Vung Tau (anchorage).
2. Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon).
3. Nha Trang.
4. Qui-Nhon.
5. Da Nang.
6. Ben Thuy.
7. Haiphong.
8. Hon Gay.
9. Cam Pha.

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is Golf (-7).

U.S. Embassy

The embassy is situated at 7 Langha Road, Ba Dinh District., Hanoi.

The mailing address is PSC 461, Box 400, FPO AP 96521-0002